

VACL

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Tyrendarra

RE-NAMING THE BOGONG MOTH

YALINGWA DIN BERRENTAK

NGAGADIN BANHUL

LEEMPEEYTWEEDYN

A message from the Chairperson...



Welcome to the second edition of the VACL Newsletter for 2007. We continue to progress with new and existing programs expanding into exciting ventures. VACL and Indigenous languages in Victoria are enjoying a fruitful period where we are seeing the real results of language retrieval: putting the recorded language into innovative and accessible forms. Dictionaries, teaching materials such as CD Roms and DVDs are being produced in various communities across Victoria and new resources are being explored through networking with communities across Australia.

I am very proud of our new linguist Dr. Christina Eira who has been doing a marvellous job and will have allowed us to achieve a lot more by the end of this year with her skills and experience on board. A different attitude amongst the Community Language Programs is evident as they are seeing many possibilities for their work.

I would also like to welcome new language workers to two of our existing Community Language Programs: Lee Healy at Taungurung in Healesville and David Tournier at Wathaurong in Geelong. Lee had been kindly volunteering her time with the Taungurung program for more than a year and her passion for her language is obvious. Lee takes on the program developed by Judy Monk as she enters retirement. Judy achieved amazing things with the Taungurung program collecting a lot of language and putting it into a community wordlist, holding song workshops and bringing the community together through regular language camps at Camp Jungai. Her drive and ability to mobilise the community and spread the use of language has created an invaluable foundation on which Lee is building with more songs, research and the development of a database.

Finally, after viewing new mediums to teach language such as the development of audiovisual cartoons at a recent conference in Townsville, I look forward to discovering more new resources and activities from across the country at the Indigenous Languages Conference in Adelaide at the end of September.

Library Update

The VACL library is continually being updated. These are a few of the new books on our shelves:

We like to have a range of children's publications from different languages, so that when you come in you can have a look at what others are doing. Recent additions include 'How the Murray River was made – A Bangerang story told by Irene Thomas', and 'Guungagu Nharangga warra – Children's Narungga dictionary'.

Many of you will be aware of Bruce Pascoe's new book 'Convincing Ground'. This is a history of colonisation – the history that school didn't teach us – told with Bruce's superb narrative skills. Come in and read a chapter or two if you have some time to spare.

An updated supplement to 'Ozbib' – a list of linguistic publications about Aboriginal Australia and the Torres Strait Islands – has been produced. A useful reference for anyone researching their language. We have plenty of 'old' books you may not have seen yet as well. Come and have a browse!

VACL is involved in the development of the "Our Languages" website initiated by ACRA in NSW. It will allow the wider community to learn Indigenous languages when it launches later this year. It will cater for multiple dialects, so that an online search for the word "emu", for example, will elicit several regional results, including audio of the correct pronunciations. The site (www.ourlanguages.com.au) is still under development and inaccessible but will be open to all when finished. Our Languages will be launched with significant pro-bono help from Microsoft under its Unlimited Potential program and technology-enabling company, Dimension Data. It received partial funding from the Federal Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts (DCITA) but additional funds will be needed to add more languages.

Ngagadin Banhul

At Ngagadin Banhul (Clear Hills) on Taungurung land, 'Craig's Hut' is being rebuilt. Taungurung people are working with other interested groups to create information signs on the site. Lee Healy, with the Taungurung Clans Aboriginal Corporation, has created this two-language sign.



Photo: Lee with a mat woven by her mother, Joyce Moate. Small baskets by Lee and her daughter Kaitlyn.

Womin djeka gundee Taungurung biik gee gup-dun buk gee gurnung-birm ba ngarrak-birm.

Welcome to Taungurung country the first people of the rivers and mountains.

Bambuga goorrnee Munyi year o Taungurung buk yanon inon gundee gee yurrbot biik goorrnee gee ngumi-yak-gorreen.

Long time ago in this joyful place Taungurung people travelled to the high country in the summer.

Gee wane-wan maloom, yan-guk-birm ba baany nguba. Gee bar bup pool yilam gundee walert-birm, mirrm-boolok-birm, wim-berr-birm, bili-birm ba goormil-birm.

The stream provided fish, waterbirds and fresh water for drinking. The bush is home to possums, kangaroos, wallabies, lizards and snakes.

Gee yirag galk-birm ba yilam goorrnee gee bar bup pool gundee ngiyagat not too yilam-birm guwambi ba gee woort-tindo banum-birm gee biik yela-monggi goorrnee gundee bilin-birm gee badjerr-birm.

The branches and bark in the bush was to build their huts for sleeping place and the many grasses on the country were made into baskets (for their possessions) by the women.

Taungurung kulin dorr yeba-mong-gi gooyun-birm, wan.gim-birm, gudjerrunbirm ba garrgin gawang-birm gee bar bup pool. Gee kulin dorr gee marra nee gunuguna gee warrangwan kweeyap wenerop djunubooling gooyun-birm ba wan.gim-birm gundee djilbak.

Taungurung men made spears, boomerangs, clubs and axe heads from the bush. The men of the tribe did the hunting for food which they used spears and boomerangs to kill.

Gee wu(u)rrk-birm galburn gaiburnin gundee warrangak gee morrok-birm gundee googarra wenerop gee marr nee gunuguna birrin. Gee kulin dorr goodon ninerr neyaroo darrang-birm, darnuk-birm kweeyap ba baany ba malgarr-birm yeldjering.

The flints were used as sharp knives to remove the skin to make possum skin cloaks which the tribe used for winter. The men would carve from trees, bowls for carrying food and water and shields for fighting.

Gee marra nee gunuguna goodon ninerr wandha berbup gundee gee yilam ngarrga-birm gee num dhawading.

Taungurung women gathered wild berries, tubers, seeds and water, put those in the bowl to bring back to camp.

Taungurung badjerr-birm bargoongagat bolli-birm, murrnong-birm, wirtiwoo-birm ba baany, wayol goorrnee gee darnuk gundee wandha ngarrak gundee yilam.

The tribe would bring joy to the camp with dances on the ceremonial ground.

Taungurung buk garremin gee balt tak gundee geerp noot too ngnool ngarrak gundee noot too buk ngnool yilam-birm, yengak-eng-eng-birm ba ngarrabirm.

Taungurung people today have the ability to introduce their language back to their people through language camps, songs and dances.



RE-NAMING THE

The Aboriginal peoples of South-Eastern Australia have a long relationship with the Bogong Moth, both in the past and now.

The Bogong Moth migrates annually to the Australian Alpine region where it can be found in large numbers in rock crevices and caves over the summer months. Historic documents recorded the importance of Bogong Moths as a food source for Indigenous peoples who visited the alpine regions (Flood 1980). These visits also allowed different tribal groups and families to meet for corroborees, story telling, marriage arrangements, trade and settling disputes (Bennett 1834; Howitt 1904; Tindale 1974).

A physical reminder of the continued importance of the Bogong Moth and the traditions surrounding its annual migration into the alpine region is evidenced through the annual Ngan Girra Festival which is held at Mungabareena Reserve in Albury,

New South Wales and was originally called the 'Bogong Moth Festival'.

An opportunity to use language...

The scientific name for the Bogong Moth is *Agrotis infusa*. But, there are currently two forms of *Agrotis infusa*. One with white hind wings (Figure 1) and one with brown hind wings (Figure 2). The brown form of *Agrotis infusa* migrates to the alpine regions of Australia and aggregates in large numbers in the granite outcrops but the white form does not appear to migrate to the alpine region and is not found aggregating in large numbers (Common 1954).

This could possibly provide the opportunity to rename the brown form of the Bogong Moth using a variant of an existing name from the languages of the Australian Aboriginal tribes of South-Eastern Australia.



Identity is a key part of Language reclamation and this is something that Alex Swords in grade 6 at Badger Creek Primary, was very much aware of when he asked to learn his language. Alex is of Paakantyi descent and lives on Wurundjeri land in Healesville.

V.A.C.L. was approached by the Koorie Liaison Officer working with Alex to see how we could assist in meeting his request. V.A.C.L. held a copy of the Paakantyi dictionary by Luise Hercus so was able to provide Alex with a vocabulary resource, but after some searching we were pleased to find that the Paakantyi community of Wilcanya N.S.W. had developed a CD Rom and Teaching and Learning book called 'Learning Paakantyi'.

Having received permission from the Paakantyi elders to purchase and use the resource, Alex has been enjoying learning his language with this during regular meetings at his school with the VACL Project Officer.

Alex appears to have natural linguistic talent and picked up the sounds and words for body parts and animals in the first couple of weeks. Teachers and the Koorie Liaison Officer have noticed a remarkable change in Alex since starting with Paakantyi. Knowing that he is learning his own language has increased his confidence and enthusiasm for learning in general and it easy to see how proud Alex is becoming of his Aboriginal heritage.

This goes to show how important language can be in supporting and building strength in Aboriginal children. From this encounter, further interest from children and guardians of other Aboriginal communities in Healesville has been expressed and it is hoped that V.A.C.L. can provide support and resources for more Indigenous kids to learn their languages at Badger Creek Primary and other schools.

BOGONG MOTH



Figure 1. A form of *Agrotis infusa* (Boisduval 1832), (Noctuidae, Noctuinae) displaying white hind wings. This male was collected at Narrabri, N.S.W., 21/7/1977 by R. Wilson leg.(ANIC). Image sourced from CSIRO Entomology. <http://flyaqis.mov.vic.gov.au/chaec/index.html>



Figure 2. A form of *Agrotis infusa* (Boisduval 1832), (Noctuidae, Noctuinae) displaying brown hind wings. This male was collected at Ourimbah, N.S.W., 9/11/1956 by I.F.B. Common leg.(ANIC). Image sourced from CSIRO Entomology. <http://flyaqis.mov.vic.gov.au/chaec/index.html>

It is possible that, for the most part, it's not really the languages that are different; it's the collectors, their ways of writing and their interpretation.

But there are some criteria to renaming the brown form of *Agrotis infusa*.

- 1) There can only be one name.
- 2) It must be added on to the current name, eg. *Agrotis infusa* something.

This causes some problems as; there is more than one language group involved, there is more than one word, and, there is more than one spelling system which could be used. One solution is to compare all of the different spellings for the Aboriginal words for Bogong Moth. It becomes clear that all variants could be pronounced as Bungong using the current spelling system of the Dhudhuroa and Waveroo Aboriginal languages of South-East Australia. That is, the word Bungong could be one of the reflexes of the word; it is a version of the word in one language that has developed from an older form of the word into several different languages with some possible variations.

If this was adopted the scientific name for the brown form of *Agrotis infusa* could become *Agrotis infusa bungong*.

But, herein lies another problem...this naming is based on purely historical records written by interested observers. The Aboriginal languages of South-East Australia are not purely historical and are currently being revived and recorded by Indigenous people.

So, let's take this beyond a historical reference – let's give the renaming of *Agrotis infusa* a contemporary reference.

I have already contacted the each of the Victorian Language Programs. But language belongs to communities, families and individuals. And so I am seeking your input. I want to hear what you think.

And so, if the scientific name of *Agrotis infusa* can be changed to reflect its Indigenous origins, the change will be a collaboration with recognition for today's Indigenous people and not a purely historical exercise with recognition for the interested observers of the past.

Pettina Love and Dr Susan Lawler

There are many different Indigenous languages associated with the alpine region of South-Eastern Australia. Many of the historical linguistic records for the word Bogong Moth don't record which language or area the word came from and those that did only mention Woradgery, Barwidgee, Minubuddong, Lake Tyers and Omeo. When we look at the many words for Bogong Moth (and break them down into individual sounds) we can see that the sounds which the recorder is trying to represent are similar.

b	o	g	o	ng
b	oo	g	o	ng
b	oo.	g	o	n
b	oo	k	o	ng
b	u	g	u	ng
b	u u	g	a	ng
b	u	g	o	ng
b	u	ng	e	ng (bah)

And the meanings assigned to these words are also similar, in that they refer either to the moth itself or to their habitat, ranging from "part of the alps at Omeo" or "place infested with fleas" to "moths and grubs" or "large moths which the aborigines are very fond of".'



P U L I I M A 2 0 0 7

The first ever Puliima National Indigenous Languages and Information Communication Technology Forum was held in Newcastle in April with 81 delegates from all around the country coming to the Awabakal Nation, converging on the CBD area of Newcastle for the forum which was held at the Newcastle Regional Museum.

The theme for the forum was "Modern Ways for Ancient Words" exploring the use of how Information Technology can support the revitalisation and reclamation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages. The Puliima Forum offered hands-on workshops, speaker presentations, product displays and panel discussions over two and a half days, allowing people to become familiar with the range of ICT products available.

Technology can play a part in supporting our challenges, from recording audio and video to making word lists and dictionaries to producing multimedia learning tools, and let's not forget using technology to preserve and disseminate the traditional languages of our land.

Linguistics in plain language

Linguistics is very useful for reviving languages.

It helps in things like –

- working out the sounds of a language that is not currently spoken,
- developing a spelling system, and
- understanding how the language has changed over time.

But... Most linguistics writing is difficult to read, because it uses many technical terms. So VACL is developing some plain-language explanations for everyone to use.

Pronouns (examples from Gunditjmara)

Words used instead of the name of someone or something – 'I', 'her', 'theirs'. Aboriginal languages have many pronouns, with complex meanings:

ngathoongal 'you and I'

ngootoowal 'you two'.

Basic pronouns are called 'personal pronouns'.

Bound Pronoun A word-ending which is a pronoun. This is common in Aboriginal languages, but there are none in English:

Yana-ngal

(literally 'go-you and I') 'We go (you and I)'

Witkak-ut-ngayi

(literally 'will look for- us [many] - they [many]')

'They will look for us'.

It's up to you... Having bound pronouns means you can decide to use a pronoun or not. You can say 'Ngathoongal yana' or just 'Yana-ngal'. Both mean 'We're going'.

Possessive Pronoun A pronoun showing who is the owner:

ngathoongat 'my'

ngootoongat 'your'.

Alienable and Inalienable Possession

Aboriginal culture doesn't think about 'ownership' the same way as English. In English, we use possessive pronouns for 'my car', 'my baby', or 'my dog'. But some Aboriginal languages don't use 'my' for things that are more like part of you – your hand, or your child. These are "inalienable." So you would say 'my car', but 'I hand'.

It's up to you... Which things do you think are 'inalienable' (like part of you)? Would you use 'my' or 'I' in your language for your dog? What else?

LANGUAGE SOUNDS

Despite the difference in grammar and other areas, many Australian languages use the same sounds.

Sounds that occur in English

Some of these sounds are the same or almost the same as sounds found in English. These include 'n', 'm', 'l', 'd' and 't', 'g' and 'k', 'b' and 'p'.

Sounds that are in between English sounds or occur in pairs

From the list of sounds above that occur in English, there are some which are pairs. These are 'd' and 't', 'g' and 'k', 'b' and 'p'. The sound for each of these pairs is actually somewhere in between the two of the English sounds, but often they are heard as the first sound at the start of words and the second sound at the end of words. For example 'b' at the start and 'p' at the end.

Sounds that don't occur in English

These sounds are the hardest for English speakers to make. These include the 'tongue-middle' sounds and the 'tongue-curved-back' sounds. There are usually two sorts of tongue-middle sounds: teeth and roof-of-mouth sounds. These are 'n', 't' or 'd' and 'l' sounds as in English but made with the middle of the tongue instead of the tip. For the teeth set the tongue middle goes almost between the teeth. For the roof-of-mouth set, the middle of the tongue touches the roof of the mouth with the tip of the tongue relaxed.

For the curved-back sounds again they usually include the 'n', 't' or 'd' and 'l' sounds as in English but made with the tongue curled back with the underside against the ridge behind the teeth and the tongue tip at the roof of the mouth.

LEEMPEEYTWEEYN

Artist Vicki Couzens developed the installation for St Paul's Square in consultation with Elders of Melbourne's Indigenous Communities:



"The campfire is our hearth. It is the place that the families gather, to share food, stories and warmth. It is the place that brings people together. The campfire is made of stone, the earth, our Mother. The flame is our Spirit, Aboriginal spirit which ebbs and flows through the Land. The light of the flame is our spiritual wisdom, embracing others, caring for and connectedness to Country is the gift we bring."

GUNDITJMARA LANGUAGE CAMPS



The Gunditjmarra Language Program recently held two Language Camps near Warrnambool and Portland. Both camps brought adults and children together in a family friendly atmosphere combining local language with cultural learning. Activities such as basket weaving, song making, walking and talking on country all played an important role. The Warrnambool Camp was held at the Brucknell Scout Camp near Timboon focussing on the Keeraywoorroong language and to focus away from the cold weather, a warming fire was the central focus of most activities.

The Portland Camp was held just off the Convincing Ground and focussed on the learning of the Dhauwurd Wurrung language and included a trip to the Tyrendarra Indigenous Protected Area, a traditional gathering and camping area for the Gunditjmarra people. Children at the Dhauwurd Wurrung Camp learnt body parts, animals, counting as well as a song composed by Yaraan Bundle.

The Gunditjmarra Language Program is now working with the VACL Linguist to train more local people in language skills.

YALINGWA DIN BERRENTAK

Joy Wandin Murphy 2007

Koondée beek yunak booreen wandagat moorooop yalingwa.

Willam wilin nanggoun woongagat toombadin onemda.

Birrarung warrawee dogil dogil engeng yearmenn beek.

Ngooloo jaboon lark tarredeboop kooeen engengs.

Bargoongagat moorooop mooroom tarredeboop.

Moondani yalingwa din berrenta din Narm.

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upcoming events

FOUNDATION FOR ENDANGERED LANGUAGES - FEL

*Working Together for Endangered Languages:
Research Challenges and Social Impacts*

University of Malaya
Kuala Lumpur
Malaysia

Dates: 26-28 October 2007

<http://www.ogmios.org/conference07/information>

FATSIL AGM & Language Forum - Canberra

"Our Journey - Our Future"

8th - 10th November 2007

go to: www.fatsil.org.au

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